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DIARY OF WHITE HOUSE LEADERSHIP
MEETINGS -- 91st CONGRESS

April 23, 1970

The President entered at 8:35 and said that Secretary Laird would discuss the message on the draft and volunteer a army which is scheduled to come to the Hill today. Laird said that it substantially translates into law the recommendations of the Gates Report. Over a period of time, it will move "in the direction of zero draft calls." This means volunteer army. To begin, the President will ask for a 20% increase in pay for enlisted men in the first two grades. By FY72, this will cost an additional $2 billion a year. It will be necessary to make changes in the Reserve and the National Guard, which heretofore have largely been populated by draft-eligible young men. He introduced Hershey's successor, Mr. Curtis Tarr, who explained the message in more detail. In addition to the message, there will be an executive order phasing out occupational, agricultural and fatherhood deferments. Present deferments will not be affected. In the future, deferments for these purposes will not be granted. The President currently does not have statutory authority to do a similar thing with respect to students, but he will request such authority in the message. If granted, he will issue another executive order which will honor all current student deferments but which will terminate deferments in the future.

RMN said that he is fully familiar with all of the old arguments that the nation should not kill off its brightest students; that the man drafted next may, if permitted to go to college, be the man to discover the cure for cancer; that the nation must maintain an ever-increasing reserve of brains, etc. On the other side of the coin, he said that the present student deferment system tends to create an elite corps composed of children of the highly privileged, a system which requires the financially poor and the dropout to go to war to fight for the elite. He noted that even the Council on Education and the

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National Education Association, both of which formerly were strong advocates of student deferments, have changed their policy and now oppose student deferments. Tarr said that educators are coming to the view that a sustained period of 4 years' instruction is probably not as productive as a course of education interrupted temporarily by military service or some other pursuit. With respect to the functioning of the lottery system, he said that the Defense Department requested for January, February and March a total of 50,500 draftees. The lottery produced only 38,000, a shortfall of 12,500. However, the system will cure this deficit by August.

Mrs. Smith inquired if the message would request extension of the draft law which is scheduled to expire July 1, 1970. Laird said that it would not. The message will ask for legislation only for the pay increase, authority to issue national draft calls and authority for the President to determine the status of student deferments. The remainder can be accomplished by executive action. Mrs. Smith said that she regarded the proposal as excellent and agreed to introduce the bill. Arends said that he considered the message timely and that the House Committee would hold hearings in July. However, he said that he has always had some misgivings about the volunteer army concept.

Wilson said that he believes the present system, which reduces the period of uncertainty through which a young man is obliged to go, works well and has the approval of the young people. He predicted that Congress will have trouble with respect to any legislation which moves in the direction of abolishing student deferments.

Scott reported that the Senate has completed the same amount of work it had completed on November 11 of last year. Virtually nothing remains on the calendar. An electoral college reform amendment will probably be reported by the Judiciary Committee shortly. He favors the district plan but has agreed to

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vote to report the direct plan. The Blackmun confirmation hearings are scheduled to begin April 29.

RMN then emphasized the importance of dramatizing inaction in the field of anti-crime legislation. He asked if the Judiciary Committee refused to move, whether it wouldn't be a proper tactic to file a discharge petition. I said that because I had never signed one and was a member of the Committee, I could not do so but that others may. I suggested that there is an alternative which might be more palatable to more members. Bill Cramer interrupted to say that I had reference to the procedure used to report the Cramer anti-riot amendment. A resolution to discharge the Judiciary Committee is referred to the Rules Committee and reported by that Committee for floor action under a rule which makes consideration of the rule in order.

The President felt that it would be wise to pursue this tactic and inquired to what bill it should be addressed. I recommended the Organized Crime bill already passed by the Senate and perhaps the drug bill as well. The President asked Arends to get the Leadership moving in this direction. I suggested that before this is undertaken, all members of the Judiciary Committee and Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee should be involved in the planning stage. The President agreed in rather specific and emphatic terms and used individual names. He also called attention to the need to get the message across to the public. He referred to the recent statement by Ramsey Clark criticizing John Mitchell's policies as a proper vehicle. He said that I should not be afraid to involve personalities. This is what people understand. "You should not be so responsible," he said. "Be responsible in your conduct but not so responsible in your words."

I told him that I had joined with 10 other Republicans in speeches on the subject inserted in the Congressional Record

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earlier this week. He said that he had not heard about them. I told him they got no currency in the press but that the Justice Department and members of the White House staff were alerted. The President then enjoined the leaders not to fall for the current doctrine of perhaps well-meaning people that we should discontinue MIRV tests and abandon ABM as an aid to the SALT talks. He said that such a course would be the heighth of folly and would defeat the disarmament prospect.

We adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

RICHARD H. POFF

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